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INFO : BRASILIA, RIO DE JANEIRO

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August 17, 1970

Incidence of Torture in Sao Paulo Appears Lessening

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Sao Paulo 480

There have been indications that over the past few months the torturing of prisoners detained in the Sao Paulo area on suspicion of subversive or terrorist activity has been scaled down. In this assertion there is no implication that physical torture has been totally abolished, but certainly the level appears to have been curtailed notably. This decrease in the use of torture is partially explained by the fact that both the military and civilian security authorities seem to have gained a measure of renewed confidence in their abilities to cope with subversion and terrorism by more conventional methods. In all likelihood, they have reassessed the internal security situation with the conclusion that the terrorist movements are not, indeed, an immediate threat to the country's security in spite of occasional intemperate remarks by these officials that "this is war" and must be waged in an all-out fashion. Other contributing factors undoubtedly are the very real success the authorities have had in containing and disrupting terrorist bands (although VPR leader Carlos LAMARCA remains at large), the severe pressure emanating from the international press and foreign organizations as well as domestic criticism in the national legislature. Still another element is probably the diminishing competition between the civilian political police organization DEOPS and the military-directed apparatus Operação Bandeirantes (OBAN), with the former having ceded in large part to the latter. OBAN officials no longer feel

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the pressing onus to prove themselves by delivering immediate results and hence can afford to adopt more humane measures during interrogation sessions.

An illustration is the case of Anna BURZTYN, a 19 year-old member of the Alianca de Liberaçao Nacional (ALN), who was apprehended in July after she had shot and wounded a Mappin department store security guard. While waiting in Mappin to meet an unidentified contact in the terrorist movement, Anna aroused the attention of a store security guard who suspected her of being a shoplifter. Detained and escorted to a side office, she panicked, drew a pistol and began firing in a vain attempt to escape. She was then forcibly seized and delivered to DEOPS officials who, when her links to the ALN became evident, turned her over to OBAN. In spite of her admittedly deep involvement in ALN activity, during her confinement in Sao Paulo (she was subsequently transferred to Rio where most of her terrorist activity had occurred) EO50X1 her person was respected and she was not subjected to torture; such treatment might well not have been accorded her several months previously, especially since she had already proven herself a violent person.

Another case is that of Denise Peres CRISPIM (aka "Celia"), daughter of assassinated Federal Deputy Jose Maria CRISPIM (PCB). Deeply involved in the Vanguardia Popular Revolucionaria (VPR) since 1967, she participated in many VPR actions, including the kidnapping of the Japanese Consul General in Sao Paulo last March. Until her recent detention by OBAN authorities EO50X1 she was the common-law wife of Eduardo LEITE (aka "Bacuri"), an important VPR sub-chieftain in the Sao Paulo area, and is expecting his child. The authorities have treated her with a great deal of consideration, and due to her advanced pregnancy she has been placed in a maternity home until the birth of her child.

Persons occupying positions which bring them into contact with people from many levels of the social spectrum likewise have indicated to the reporting officer that there seem to be fewer complaints about the torture of persons detained on suspicion of terrorist or subversive activity. For example, Dr. Ephraim dos CAMPOS, a MDB member of the Sao Paulo City Council who was elected with the backing of the PCB and has good links to the extreme left, attested to this development during a recent conversation. To illustrate, he said that during the week of August 10 seven university students were detained by DEOPS on suspicion of subversive plotting. Although the youths

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were grilled intensively, they were not subjected to physical torture. Dr. Campos contrasted their situation with that of Olavo HANSEN (Sao Paulo 485) which the councilman has been instrumental in publicizing.

Dom José LAFAYETTE, an Auxiliary Bishop of Sao Paulo who is one of the Church's main contacts with the general public, affirmed to the reporting officer that complaints coming to him about torture from relatives of detained persons were very much on the wane. A prudent man, Dom Lafayette suggested that although not publicly condoned by the GOB, violence was lamentably an institution in present day Brazilian life and cited the infamous "death squads" of recent years. Thus, he emphasized, the mentality and orientation toward physical abuse of those charged with public security could not be changed over a short period of time. Nevertheless, he concluded, the arbitrary and indiscriminate application of torture by civilian and military security officials has certainly been tempered in recent months.

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